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"Give me your hand, lad, and tell me whether you have seen any thing of the Brigade? I'm afraid we're in a condemned diffikility!"

THE PHANTOM PRINCESS; OR, Ned Hazel, The Boy Trapper.

BY CAPT. J. F. C. ADAMS,

The Hunter-Author, and Nephew of the Celebrated Old Grizzly Adams, the Bear-tamer of the Rocky Mountains.

CHAPTER I.

A "CONDENMED DIFFIKILITY."

"HERE I am in a condemned diffikility ag'in," muttered Nick Whiffles, as he seated himself on a broad, flat rock, on the bank of the Elk river, far up in Oregon, close to the boundary line between that then wild territory and British America.

The eccentric old trapper had spent many years in roaming through the vast solitudes of the North-west, sometimes in the service of the Hudson's Bay Company, and sometimes in the employ of the North-west Fur Company, but perhaps more frequently entirely alone. A man of his peculiar temperament and tastes was sure to be widely known, both at the far-scattered trading-posts and among the numerous trappers and hunters that wandered through that vast wilderness, which at that comparatively recent day, knew scarcely any thing of the advantages of civilization.

As was the inevitable custom of Nick, when in a quandary, he relieved himself by self-communing.

"The Whiffles family was always noted for the way they had of getting into diffikility. The first thing I remember was in getting spanked on account of some condemned diffikility that I had got into with my mother, and the next thing was the measles and whooping-cough, and then when I got fairly over them, and a dozen other diseases, our house took fire and burned down, and about the time the old gent got it rebuilt, it took fire and burned down ag'in. Wal, he didn't

say nothin', but when the cabin went the third time, he got mad and said that thing was getting rather monotonous, and he would like, by way of variety, to see it shook down by an airthquake, or carried away by a hurricane; but of course none of them things happened.

"Then, when the old gentleman took his last sleep, and they come to read his will, we found the lawyer had my name down wrong: instead of being Nick Whiffles, Esq., it was Old Nick, so I didn't get the bequest at all, but them as everything else had been willed away already, I didn't lose much after all. My older brother got the house, but, afore he could move in it there come a big freshet that carried it down-stream, and that was the last of that.

"There was no end to my diffikilities. When I got to be a young man, I spent a whole summer's earnings in buying a suit of clothes. I had got to be a little tender on a cross-eyed girl that lived about a half-mile off, and, as soon as I could stow myself away in my new suit, I started out to see her. She gave me a hint that she wa'n't particularley anxious, as, when I went to go in the house, she set their dog on me, and the very first dash he made, he ripped out the whole seat of my pants and run away with it, so that there was no chance of putting the missing cloth back ag'in.

"Wal, Nick Whiffles has seen a good deal in the way of diffikility since them days, but, somehow or other, the good Lord has brought me through all right, and, although I bear a good many soars, I'm yet sound in

limb and wind, and able to eat my usual hunk of venison, foller the trail of an imemy, or run my eye along old Humbug here in a way that'll make her bite when she banks; and for all this I'm thankful."

The old trapper was silent a few moments, as if in a deep reverie. Near by his horse, known as Shagbark, was lazily cropping the grass in a way that showed he was in no famishing condition, to say the least.

At the feet of Nick Whiffles flowed the Elk river, quiet and unruffled by the slightest ripple of wind. On the other side, and as far as the eye could reach, stretched the Oregon woods. There were woods on every hand, and far off in the distance could be seen the white peaks of the Rocky Mountains, their tops covered with the snows of centuries.

It was one vast solitude, such as it had stood at "creation's morn," and looking upon the figure of the trapper as he half-sat and half-reclined upon the stone, it would have been easy to imagine him some statue cut from the rock itself.

But, as Nick remarked, at the opening of our story, he was in a "condemed diffikility"—nothing very serious, it is true, but enough to cause him some annoyance, and to occasion him considerable communing with himself.

Three days before he had crossed the line into British America and was making his way toward the Saskatchewan, when he turned out of his path, somewhat, to call at Fort Wilber to see some of his old friends,

egion Department of the Hudson Bay Company was expected in within a week; it had divided up into several companies and two of the canoes were on their way down the Elk river, for the purpose of bartering for a very valuable lot of furs and peltries that were known to be in the possession of a party of Blackfeet, whose village was on the northern bank of this stream. The traders expected to obtain Nick Whiffles to act as a sort of "go-between" in the business, as he stood on good terms with these treacherous people, and his universally known and respected probity could not fail to make him a valuable man to both parties in the business.

Nick had acted in this capacity before, so that when the wishes of the trappers were made known to him, he felt under a sort of obligation to accept, and he turned the head of his horse, Shagbark, toward the south, and, accompanied by his sagacious dog, Calamity, made the best possible time for Elk river again.

The particular "diffikility" to which he referred was this: His cabin was about twenty miles away from where we now find him, and there he had left a young protege of his—a bright-eyed boy known as Ned Hazel, a sort of waif of the woods, that had come into his hands, in a singular manner, a number of years before when he was little more than a mere child. It had been left at the "cottage," with the understanding that his adopted "father" was not expected to return under three weeks, and now he was back again at the end of that

number of days. He was anxious to take the little fellow on this short excursion, and had stopped at his house in the hope of finding him, but he was off on a hunt of his own, and Nick, not daring to wait, had hurried off for Elk river, where we now find him.

But where was the brigade? Above him or below him? That was the question for him to decide, and having no data by which to make his calculation, he set it down as a "condemed diffikility."

He had sent Calamity a half-mile up the river to watch and to report to him the first appearance of the brigade, while he enjoyed the uncomfortable sensation of knowing that, as likely as not, the party for whom he was waiting, might be drawing further away from him each moment.

"There's a company of them Nor-westers somewhere in this neighborhood, and if they happen to run ag'in' the brigade there'll be the condemned diffikility ever heard tell on. Hello! what's up, Shagbark?"

His horse had suddenly ceased eating, and, raising his head, with the grass unchewed in his mouth, gave a whinny, clearly indicating that some one or something was approaching.

"What is it?" asked Nick, instantly becoming all vigilance himself.

The horse held his head motionless for a moment, and then resumed his cropping the grass, as unconsciously before.

Nick Whiffles smiled.

"That means it's Calamity coming. You critters understand each other about as well as I understand you both."

The words were yet in his mouth, when the huge dog that had been the companion of Whiffles in so many exciting incidents of his life, burst through the undergrowth and signified his pleasure by whining, wagging, and licking the hand of his master. The latter patted his head with no less delight.

"What is it, Calamity, for I know by your ways that there's something coming down the river? Is it the brigade or some other sort of animal?"

How, or by what means, Nick got at the meaning of the dog, it would be impossible for us, an "outsider," to say—but it required only a few moments for him to learn that it was not the brigade, but a single canoe descending the river.

"That much being sartain," said Nick, "the difficulty is as to who handles the paddle; like enough some murderous Blackfoot; but," he added, with some hesitation, as he narrowly scrutinized the actions of his dog, "the animal don't act in that way. He seems to have a better opinion of the chap than me."

As it was impossible to gather the full meaning of Calamity, Nick could only cast his eye up the river and wait for the mystery to solve itself.

He was not left long in waiting. Around the curve in the river, just above him, a small canoe suddenly shot to view, in which was seated a small boy, dressed as a hunter, and using the long ashen paddle with no slight skill.

The eyes of Nick Whiffles sparkled as he recognized the lad, and he rose and waved his hand as a signal.

"Bless the soul of little Ned; his own father couldn't love him any more than I do."

The water splashed and flashed in the sunlight, as the lad sent his little boat skimming over the surface of the river. A few moments only were needed for the prow of the canoe to strike the gravel at the feet of the hunter, who advanced to the water's edge to greet his pet.

"Give me your hand, lad, and tell me whether you have seen any thing of the brigade."

"Nothing, uncle Ned."

"I was afraid you hadn't; then I'm afraid we're in a condemned difficulty."

CHAPTER II.

THE HUDDON BAY MEN.

An observer would not have failed to be struck with the contrast of appearance between Nick Whiffles and the boy with whom he was now conversing.

The hunter was bronzed, scarred and toughened by the torrid heat of summer and the Arctic coldness of the tempests that during the winter months sweep over the plains and mountains of the North-west. His face was shaggy with its untrimmed grizzled beard, and his hair, that escaped from beneath his coon-skin cap, was silvery by the same hand that spares none of us. There was immense strength in those long, muscular limbs, and although Nick generally moved with a slow, shuffling gait, he was capable of astonishing quickness and celerity of movement when necessary.

Nick, as he was called, was about fifteen years of age, rather slight for that number of years, with eyes as bright, and cheeks as delicately ruddy, as if he had been born and reared in the palace of some noble in sunny France.

His movements were all grace, and underneath the delicacy of feature and color was the grand basis of rugged health that had already triumphed over obstacles under which many a man would have succumbed. There was no doubt that the deep affection of Nick Whiffles was fully reciprocated by Ned; whose lustrous eyes glowed with a brighter light when he looked the grizzled old hunter in the face.

The boy began frolicking with the dog, while Nick turned his eyes up-stream, with an anxious expression of countenance that showed that his mental "difficultly" was far from being purely imaginary. Suddenly he turned to Ned.

"Were ye looking for me, lad?"

"That was what brought me here."

"And what reason had you, to think me here, when you see'd me start for Fort William?"

"Why, uncle Nick," replied Ned, pausing in his gambols with Calamity, "you hadn't been gone a half day when I happened to think it was just the time last year when you went down the river with the brigade, and I knew you expected to do the same this spring; so I was sure you had forgot it. But you was so far away that there was no use in my trying to overtake you, and I thought perhaps you would think of it and come back yourself. Sure enough, when I come back I found signs in the cabin that told me you had been there. I understood what it meant, so I made for the river, and jumping into the canoe, here I am—"

"If I only knew— Hark!" suddenly exclaimed Whiffles, his face lighting up, while he assumed an attitude of attention. "Did you hear nothing then, younger?"

"Yes; it is the brigade," replied Ned, also intently listening. "Yes; it's the brigade," he quickly added; "just hear them!"

Through the quiet air, mellowed and softened by the intervening distance, came the sound of male voices singing in time with the regular sweep of their paddles. There was a profundity of tone, and an impressive melody in the blending of the score and more of voices that struck the ears of both Nick and the boy.

"I've heard that same thing many a time before," muttered the hunter more to himself than to his companion, "and it allers makes me feel all overish. Three years ago, when I was on the Saskatchewan, I was asleep one night, in my canoe, when I awoke and heard the brigade about a mile up the river where they were encamped, singing. I listened awhile till they started off on the identical hymn that I used to hear sung when I was a boy. Wal, fore I known it, the tears was running down my cheeks, and I was back in the little village church at home, with my old gray-haired mother and father, the choir singing that same hymn. Wal, wal, what's the use!"

He drew his hand across his eyes, as though some mist obscured his vision, and, with a great sigh, turned his back upon the past and looked up the river—into the future.

Two large boats, or canoes, a moment later glided to view, the melody swelling out, with a full volume, as it was free from all intervening obstruction, and floated over the smooth face of the river.

Each canoe was capable of holding twenty-five or thirty men, but, at present, there was little over twenty in the entire party.

They were after furs and peltries, and took with them a good working crew and no more.

A few moments after they appeared, Nick Whiffles stepped to the edge of the stream and motioned with his hand for them to approach. He was recognized at once, and both canoes instantly headed toward shore. The inmates showed no intention of landing, but the foremost rounded to for him and Ned to step aboard.

"We yield you the place of honor," said a round-faced, Scotch-looking gentleman, whom Nick recognized as William Mackintosh, a leading man in the employ of the Hudson Bay Company. "There is room for your boy and your dog. I don't suppose you want to take your horse along?"

"No; I will leave Shagbank here."

"Suppose he wanders away?"

"He knows better than to go very far; and he and Calamity understand each other so well that they're sure to find each other out. Come, dog, in with you, and lad, do you foller?"

Calamity sprung lightly into the front of the canoe, while the boy leaped, as nimly as a fawn, after him. Then the old hunter followed, with more deliberation and dignity. As he glanced over the crews, he identified quite a number, and nodded good-naturedly to them. But no other salutation passed between them, they attending strictly to business, leaving their director, Mr. Mackintosh, to play the part of host.

The latter chatted pleasantly with Nick, but all the time he nervously scanned the canoe, while the boy, and occasionally glancing at the shore as he passed by.

"Nick," said Mr. Mackintosh, after a while, "I had heard that you had a boy, but I never saw him before. He doesn't resemble you a bit."

"And why should he?"

"I believe you can always detect a likeness between father and son, and I've been studying for the last ten minutes to see where it is between you and him, but it isn't there at all."

"I never was married, and consequently I never had a son. He is no more a relation of mine than you are."

"Ah! who is he?"

"Ned Hazel."

"I know, but where did he come from, and how is it that he is in this part of the world?"

Nick seemed on the point of replying to this question in full, when he suddenly checked himself.

"It's all the same to you, Mr. Mackintosh, we won't talk about that thing. You understand?"

The Scotchman did understand, and showed his good breeding, by skillfully turning the conversation upon business matters.

"We shan't make the Indian village tonight, I'm afraid, Nick!"

The hunter turned his head, and scrutinized the shore a moment, so as to make sure of his location before answering.

"No; but there is going to be a full moon, and you can go a good distance; you order try and hit it near daylight."

"Can we do it by rowing an hour or two this evening?"

"Yes; powerful easy."

"Then it shall be done; we can make a good dozen miles before night."

"Yes, as we've got the current with us."

"You haven't seen any of the Nor-westers have you?"

"Not lately; but there's a party of 'em somewhere in the country. I've run ag'in' signs of 'em, and then I've heard of 'em through some of the red-skins."

"I hope they won't get down to the Blackfoot village ahead of us, for we count on making a good haul there."

"I don't think that's any likelihood of that," replied Ned. "Can we do it by rowing an hour or two this evening?"

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SATURDAY JOURNAL.

3

"Jist so, pard," he replied; "now fur operations. We've got fifteen hundred dollars to commence onto—that air money you wons last night—an' I've got a 'claim' up here on Gopher creek that's worth nigh onto five thousand, an' of the dirt is 'panning' out well, an' the 'vein' continues, I might git eight thousand for it. You see I own one-sixth of the original 'strike' hyer. Wal, now, my idee is this: we'll go right to work to on't onto that air claim, an' as soon as we can realize 'bout twenty thousand we'll go east, an' put Mister Livingstone through. How's that, pard?"

"Square!" I replied, using the mining expression.

"Honest Injun!" returned Joe, with a hearty clasp of the hand.

It was now getting late. I looked at my wa'ch; it was a little past eleven. Joe announced his intention of "turning in," and immediately proceeded to do so. I sat down to write to Nellie, at Buffalo. I had written her a few lines from Denver City, but, as I was uncertain then as to where I should go, I directed her not to answer but wait until she should hear from me again. Now that I was certain of remaining in "Dead Man's Gulch," I was desirous of hearing from her; so I wrote quite at length. I told her that my prospects were good and I hoped to return East within a year at the most; and I finally finished, with an assurance that I thought of her more and more every day, and that I did not know how well I liked her until fate had separated us.

I knew very well that her keen woman's eye would discern more than the written page expressed. Leave a woman alone for finding out when a man loves her! A subtle instinct in their natures always detects the truth. A careless word, spoken perhaps without thought—a flash of the tell-tale eye, unseen by all, except the one—a smile that lights up the face at the approach of the loved object—all these trifles, light in themselves, yet are proofs "strong as holy writ" to the girl's heart that the love she seeks for is given.

I did not fear but that Nellie would guess my meaning.

My letter finished, I sealed it up and prepared to retire. First I turned the key in the lock of the door. There was need of precaution, for we were in a rough country, and of course it was known all over town that we had won considerable money the night before; and, as there was no place to deposit said money, why of course we must carry it on our persons. Many a man has been murdered in the mining region for a few ounces of gold-dust. Protection in the Far West lies in revolvers and bowie-knives, and not in the strong hand of the law.

Our money I carried in a belt around my waist, and we slept with our revolvers under our pillows. Just before blowing out the candle I looked out of the window. The night was very dark, and the street was quite silent—a silence, however, broken now and then by the drunken whoop and hallo of some fellow staggering to his shanty.

Out went the candle and I went into bed. I lay quiet, perhaps half an hour, but no sleep came. In vain I closed my eyes; slumber would not seal them. Something—what it was, I could not tell—impressed me with a feeling of uneasiness. In the stillness of the night, the ticking of the watch under my pillow seemed to reverberate through the room as loud as one of the old-fashioned German clocks. In vain I turned from side to side. I could not sleep. Then a sensation of coming danger began to make itself felt in my mind. What was it that gave me this uneasy feeling? I answered, because I could not go to sleep and my watch ticked loudly. Not very strong grounds for apprehension, surely!

Then my thoughts wandered to Nellie, the strange girl who held my heart tangled up in the meshes of her sunny hair. Would she ever be mine? Oh! that it might be! and, as her face with the steel-blue eyes, the fair pearl skin, and the strange-hued hair—that in the sunlight rippled like threads of gold—rose before me in the darkness, the rosy lips, honey-sweet in their full ripeness, smiled upon me; the eyes now beaming softly, melting with love, and with the strange, witching, thrilling glance that holy passion alone can give, looked full upon me; the lips unclosed; the warm breath, sense-entrancing in its purity and sweetness, came softly against my fevered cheek and cooled its fire, as the sea-breeze from old ocean, in the summer time, breathes cooling balm over the heated earth; a single sentence came from the lips and hovered on the air: "I love you!" so low, so soft, yet so sweet, a lover's ear alone could catch the meaning of that sound. I was happy, for I was in the dreamland of love—that bright clime, which only the fiery heart can know. The face came nearer and nearer; a pair of arms so round, so plump in their pinkish-whiteness, that even Helen of Troy, the Grecian beauty herself, might have envied, were placed around my neck; the lips came close to mine; a moment I pressed them in their dewy fullness, drank the rich draught of that which lay imprisoned beyond their scarlet surface, and—

"Creak!"

With a start and a shiver that seemed to chill the blood leaping in my veins, I awoke from my dream of love.

"Creak!"

Again the strange noise came from the entry-way. It sounded as if a board had yielded a little under a footstep and then resumed its place again. In the night, one hears even the smallest sounds. It was certain that some one was prowling about in the entry. What could he be doing there? It was evidently not a belated lodger seeking his room, for he would have walked boldly, and not with this stealthy caution.

Again I heard a sound—this time it was a footfall; there was no mistake. Some one was outside the door, and his purpose was mischief. Quietly, I put my hand under the pillow and pulled out my revolver. I did not cock it, for I knew the clink of the hammer would alarm the villain. That I did not wish to do, for I was determined to teach the thief a lesson.

Then came a sudden "click" as though some one was tampering with the key in the lock. Joe was sleeping soundly. I did not attempt to awaken him, as I knew I should alarm the intruder if I did.

Another "click," and the key turned in the lock and the bolt shot back, at the same instant. Covered by the noise—as a military man might say—I cocked my revolver. I then realized that I had, in all probability, to deal with a gang of practiced burglars.

The door began to open slowly; and, noiselessly, I leveled the revolver in the direction of the door. The room was so dark I could not see a foot before me. I could only judge by the sound when the door was fully open.

"Easy, Tim!" came in a hoarse whisper, from the doorway. They were in the room then. The time for action was at hand. My finger was on the trigger; I was ready for them. Then I became conscious that the ruffians, with slow and stealthy steps, were approaching the bed. I judged from this that they were well acquainted with the room.

Now, I thought, the time had come to play my part in this mysterious midnight drama, so, with a sudden spring, I leaped to the floor and pulled the trigger of my "Colt." Crack went the hammer down on the cap, but no report followed. The revolver had missed fire. Quick as thought I jumped to the right, and at the same moment re-cocked my pistol. The movement saved my life, for I received a terrible blow upon my shoulder that, otherwise, would have fallen upon my head—the blow given with some, to me, unknown weapon, for it was not a club, but seemed more like a sling-shot, but with a peculiar soft feeling which did not, however, deaden its force; it almost paralyzed my left shoulder and knocked me to the floor. I pulled the trigger again; this time the weapon did not miss fire.

"The flash of the discharge illuminated the room for a second and revealed a very melo-dramatic picture. In and by the doorway stood "English Bob" and three stalwart ruffians, while Joe sat up in the bed, revolver in hand, with a sleepy and astonished air. I caught a glimpse of the weapon in "Bob's" hand that had knocked me down. I recognized it in an instant, for I had often read of it. It was a "sand-bag"—that is, a small bag shaped like the covering of a large sausage and filled with sand. A more dangerous weapon man never took in his hand, for a blow from it dealt on the head will generally kill outright and scarcely leaves a mark. Now I knew—for it flashed upon my mind in an instant—how Pete Brown, the miner, had been killed; he had met his death by this weapon in the hands of "English Bob" or some of his men; he had been murdered for his gold-dust.

It felt it was a struggle for life or death. Scarcely had the light from the flash of the powder of my pistol died away, ere, crack! crack! went Joe's revolver, and one fired by some one of the attacking party. A howl of pain from one of the ruffians announced that Joe's shot had told. Luckily, as yet, neither Joe nor I had been touched. A noise outside in the entry and on the stairs told that the house had been alarmed by the shots. The ruffians, frightened by the noise, made a rush for the entry.

"Let's git, boys! We're in a trap!" growled Bob, in his hoarse voice.

"Go fur 'em Jim!" yelled Joe, dashing of the bed and into the entry, blazing away at the retreating ruffians with his revolver. I followed him. The entry was lighted dimly by candles in the hands of the astonished denizens of the hotel, who had flooded into the passage in very scanty costume, nearly all carrying a revolver or bowie-knife in their hands.

Three or four, with Jones the landlord at their head, were coming up the stairs. Jones took in the situation in a moment.

"Throw down your we'pons and surrender, Bob, or I'll put a bullet through you!" yelled Jones, holding his candle in one hand and flourishing a revolver in the other.

"The blazes yer will!" shouted "English Bob," who was indeed in a dangerous position, for the landlord and his party blocked up the stairway, while Joe and I and some other boarders, were advancing behind; so that the ruffians were penned in between two fires.

"Throw down your we'pons!" again repeated the landlord.

"Go to —!" and Bob consigned the landlord to an extremely hot region. During this short parley all parties had remained motionless.

"You be durned! If you don't drop that shooting-iron inside of a minute, I'll dril a hole right through yer!" exclaimed Jones, mad as a hornet.

"You will, — you!" growled Bob. "I'll have the first fire!" and, quick as lightning, he leveled at Jones and fired. The landlord also fired, but in his haste the ball went high over the ruffian's head. Not so, however, with the ball from the "crackman's" pistol, for that struck Jones in the shoulder, and, for a moment, staggered him. The ruffians took advantage of the confusion occasioned by Jones' wound, among the defenders of the stair-case, and dashed upon them. Terrified, the men on the stairway fired a hasty shot or two that damaged the walls only, and then fled. Bob and his crew took advantage of this, and rushing down the stairs, escaped into the street, followed by shots from Joe and myself, but in the uncertain light, I think they escaped without harm.

Jones had fallen at the head of the stairs, and fainted. I knew it was useless to pursue the ruffians in the darkness, and said as much to Joe, who was boiling with rage.

One of the balls fired by the brave defenders of the stair-case had missed them and taken off the top of Joe's ear. It was only a slight wound, but it enraged Joe fearfully. In fact, it was a wonder that, in the melee, we had not been shot by mistake.

As the morning was quite chilly, Joe and I kept close to the fire. I noticed that the big miner, whom Jones had addressed as Bill Simmons, was circulating around from one group to another, stopping awhile to talk with each little knot. At last he lounged up to where Joe and I stood.

"How are yer, stranger?" he said, nodding familiarly to me. "You raked that pile mighty well, 'fther night, down at 'Bob's' saloon; cuss me, ef you didn't go fur it like lightning. That ain't many men that gits away with them as well as you did. You git it bullet!"

I thanked him for his compliment, and modestly told him that I did the best I could.

"I see you, arterwards in the skirmish, too. Fur a leetle feller you hit like chain-lightning. What mought your name be?"

"Robert James," I answered.

"From the East, I s'pose?" he continued.

"Yes, from New York city."

"Wal, now! Do you know, I reckoned that you were from New York, 'cos they raise some lively boys thar. I'm from 'Egypt,' 'way down in old Illinois, nigh the Ohio. I don't want to 'pear curious, stranger, but what mought ha' bin your business out in York?"

"I am a detective," I answered.

"Show!" he cried, in astonishment; "one of the cusses that hunts down rascals? Wal, now, you've got right into bis'n, ain't yer?"

"It looks like it," I answered.

"Do you know, we shouldn't have cleaned 'em out so the other night, of a lot of 'Bob's' roughs hadn't bin up-country. I 'spect we'll have a lively time 'fore long, 'cos I've bin talking with the boys, an' they all agree that these cusses have got to leave town or fight. Ef they do show fight, an' we take any one on 'em alive, Judge Lynch will have work ahead for him," and with this sage reflection, Mr. Bill Simmons strolled away.

Six o'clock found about two hundred men in the square—the entire fighting force that cared to take part in the melee. The mayor—we beg his pardon, we mean the ex-mayor, as he had self-suspended himself until the

"Hyer I am, doctor," said Jones, himself, from the bed, for he by this time had recovered from his faint.

"Been in a leetle difficulty, eh?" asked the doctor, expertly examining the wounds, first stripping off the shirt.

"Leetle? Blazes! I reckon it would have bin a heap of a fight, if they hadn't got a way with me so quick!" growled Jones. "Am I hurt bad, doctor?"

"Oh, no! the bullet's gone clean through the shoulder. Take care you don't catch it cold in it; you'll be all right in a few days," was the consoling response of the doctor.

"If I could only git out to fix them fel-

lers, I wouldn't care a cuss!" cried Jones, emphatically.

"See here, Bill Simmons, you're a friend of mine, you air; now if you don't git up a vigilance committee an' clean out these cussed thieves an' gamblers, I'll say you're a durned skunk!" This was addressed to the stalwart miner, who had done such tall fighting in the gambling saloon.

"I am hurt bad, doctor?"

"I'm your man, hide an' harr!" cried Bill. "Say, boys, who'll go with me?" he said, addressing those present.

A general yell of "me! me!" from the

crowd.

"Hold on, boys, a moment!" the little doctor sung out, getting on a chair. He had evidently great weight with the miners, as they all paused at his request, and prepared to listen to what he had to say.

"Remember, gents," said the doctor, "that I am mayor of this city—chosen by your votes, and that it is my duty to see that the laws are carried out. Remember that a vigilance committee is something not recognized by the law; consequently, to form a vigilance committee is to engage in an unlawful act, and it is my duty to warn you against it."

A growl of disapprobation greeted these remarks.

I knew the temper of the miners well, and I knew that, if the worthy mayor attempted to stem the current of popular vengeance, he would get himself into trouble;

but, the little doctor was a shrewd politician, and knew the people he had to deal with well.

"Patience, gents," he said, with a dignified wave of the hand. "Hear me out, then speak. As I have said, this vigilance committee is an unlawful proceeding, but what are the reasons that give rise to it? I will tell you, fellor-citizens! A gang of desperadoes have banded themselves together, right in the midst of our glorious city, which is the envy of the surrounding country; they have, at the dead of night, when all nature is wrapped in tranquil slumber, except the bull-frog and the owl, they have come right into our principal hotel and shot our esteemed friend, Bill Jones, whom a better cuss does not exist, and who keeps as good liquor as any man in the diggins. And not only that; last night they double-banked your mayor, who now addresses you, and won a hundred dollars from him of poker! These are the reasons why you form a vigilance committee. As a mayor, it is my duty to warn you against any overt act, but, as a man—a fellor-citizen—I sympathize with ye, and I suspend myself from the mayorship, until the leetle difficulty is concluded, so that I may go in with you, without breaking my oath of office, tooth and nail!"

A tremendous shout testified the crowd's appreciation of this telling stump speech.

"And now, gents," continued the doctor—or, we'll give him his official title, and call him mayor—"I move that we adjourn to the public square, kindle a bonfire, assemble every honest man in town who is willing to pull a trigger against these blackguards, choose a leader, and move upon the enemy's works at once."

Another shout showed the crowd's approval of the movement.

"And now, gents, I invite the crowd toicker down stairs!"

The crowd accepted the mayor's invitation with alacrity, and the "icker" duly disposed of, proceeded at once to the public square.

It was now getting on to four o'clock. A huge bonfire was kindled in the center of the square; runners were dispatched in different directions to summon the fighting-men, and those assembled on the ground gathered in little knots to talk over the approaching contest.

The miners were very bitter against "English Bob" and his gang; scarcely one of them but had some story to tell—how a miner had been fleeced out of his gold-dust through the agency of this gambling crew, and perhaps beaten half to death afterward. No wonder the feeling was strong against them.

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The Literary Attractions which are to follow, will far eclipse the triumphs of the late issues of this

FAVORITE OF THE WEEKLIES.

Readers will welcome this change, since it enables us, by the use of new and more compact type, on our editorial and inside pages, to furnish our readers with an equivalent of five columns more reading matter, thus throwing additional beauty, interest and value into this already

PEERLESS PAPER OF THE PERIOD.

Contributors and Correspondents.

MS. by Helen Wentworth, is no crime that we do not even care to name at the author's expense of sending it in print. Whenever accomplished writers and experienced editors for the press find it not an easy matter to dispose of their works, how can persons wholly unqualified for writing expect to be successful? Not so, Mrs. M. does not observe. Can make no use of essay by Hope, AN AM IN LIFE. It is not particularly original, nor very well expressed.—The poem, KILDARE, is evidently written for the Bungtown Annualizer. It would be well to have it published, and to pay for his clerical printer. Perhaps he can't wait an iota out of it. We can't. Will use SCARE ON THE NINE: THE LAWYER'S PLOT; ISOLINE; ALL FOR A VALENTINE; THE ARBOR CHILL; we will hold for further consideration. Not so, Mrs. M. does not observe. Will find place for it—Can not see border sketch, CHAWED UP. No stamps—Will try and find place for poem, REFUGED.—Can make no use of sketches, LOVING AND LOVED, and FESTOED BY FLAMINGOES; and the like. Not so, Mrs. M. does not observe. Will find place for it—Can not see border sketch, A RIBBON BOW; THE BINGHAMTON BELLE. Of latter let me say, no writer has any right to introduce living persons into a story to do them discredit. It is, however, a very good sketch for assumed wrongs.—A GALLANT GALLANT may do for some Lady's Book. It is rather "sentimental" for readers who want something besides rose leaves for their mental proverber. The author of the poem, REFUGED, has a good experience teaches her that love is something more than worship of a muse. We return A NANCY with a PANTHEL. Our Camp Fire Yarns series is provided for ahead.

PALAGON says he has lately read one of the best and most interesting novels, and finds it a tortoise shell of stuff, evidently by a foreign author, and asks the question: "Is it true that some papers rehash foreign stories, and give them out as original? It is true, Mr. P. It is a favorite mode of making capital out of other people's investments, and of passing them off with cheap matter. Such stuff finds no place in these columns."

Groveys wants to translate for us a fine German story. His price is reasonable enough if he has to pay any thing for board and clothes, but we can not see that kind of matter. It may do for some other paper, but not for us. What we want is original American stories with the true ring in them.

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"No—no—no" to Mrs. R. B. C.'s proposition. We know no South no North, no East no West; but we do know our whole great and glorious country.

Foolscap Papers.

The Battle of Bunker Hill Monument.

THERE are many popular fallacies concerning the battle of Bunker Hill Monument.

In the first place, Bunker Hill is not a hollow in the State of Kentucky, as usually reported in history, but an eminent eminence in one of the hub-bubs of Boston; and if all "our grandfathers" who fought bravely there for the everlasting glory of proud nephews, had really been there, there would have been enough to eat all the British up, and then sit down and wait for dessert. My grandfather, who was there, gave me the only true history of the battle, and he had superior advantages of knowing, for when they began to shoot, he left the ranks and went up a handy tree to get a better sight, and his speed in getting up that tree has long been a matter of history.

Our grandfathers, under General Washington, occupied the crest of the hill, feeling themselves very much above the enemy as they looked down upon them. They had been hastily gathered there from the neighborhood; many had heard the news while plowing, and had jumped on their horses without untying the plows, and started even without blacking their boots, armed only with gun-hooks which they had snatched

ed from over the mantel, or scabbards which had long rusted against the wall, single-barreled ramrods, destructive flints, powdered wigs and pockets full of rocks.

The British, under Stonewall Jackson, landed from their boats at the precise time announced in the small bills; each with a mitrailleuse under his arm, and his conscience heavily loaded; while the Alabama, and other British vessels in the harbor, began to pour whole bucketsful of destructive fire upon the rail-fence behind which sat our grandfathers in their arm-chairs, reading the late news from the siege of Paris.

Still our grandfathers were not in the least bit disconcerted, but quietly wiped their spectacles, and looked over the tops of them at the British coming up the hill in solid order, lock-stitch step, and held their hands over the muzzles of their guns, reserving their fire until they got within squirrel's distance, when a blaze of lead flashed along the whole brow of the hill, which caused the British to think they were terribly brou-beaten, and induced them to attempt the impossible maneuver of each man getting behind the other, whereby they soon found themselves at the foot of the hill, except those who had no notion or motion either to run or roll down.

History says that there they reformed, singing, "Rally Round the Flag Boys," and "Johannes Broughne's Remains Resolving into Original Ground," but this my grandfather begs to contradict; however, they went up again, the officers all in the rear to prevent straggling, and as they approached again, the whole American line exploded the second time, when the native British modesty showed itself by each man trying to allow his neighbor to be in front, and in so doing they soon found themselves at the foot of the hill again, with a terrible loss of glory, and much to the interest of the Fourth of July.

In this attack my grandfather received thirteen shots in the tree which he was behind, and he was so filled with nervous patriotism that he shook all the acorns off that oak unconsciously.

Some fellow suggested to the British General that, owing to the great slaughter among his troops, it would be an act of humanity to put bastinados on their backs, which was done, and they started back the third time, rather *too* well acquainted with the road, but at this point our grandfathers discovered that they were out of codfishballs and wig-powder, so the best thing they could do to avoid an instant defeat (the fire of the enemy was coming strong, although they tried to put it out with Engine No. 29) was to send a man out to read a few destructive and distracting pages of Boston metaphysics, which was done, and the British immediately lost three hundred and sixty-five and a quarter men. It took their heads clean off; but, sad to say, the man who read it died, too, during the operation, and the British rallied, and began to tear the fence down which separated them from our grandfathers, chanting their fierce war-cry, "How are you off for Stamps To-Day?" and pulling off our grandfathers' wigs indiscriminately, playing football with them in a manner that was very damaging to our national towl and the cause of liberty in general. With their feelings aroused to indiscriminate and sanguinary ire by this indignity, our grandfathers turned at (Boston) bay, and began to crack the British over the heads with the reversed ends of their guns, in the way which is so thrillingly described in all patriotic orations. At this period my grandfather, burning with indignation, got down out of the tree and started to run to Boston to get a horse-pistol which he knew to be there, and kill all the British, he said, with great slaughter, when he got a shot which incapacitated him from serving on the bench as a judge for a long time, and he was ever afterward opposed to uncivil treatment of people when their backs were turned. After being in that tree and suffering for his country terribly nearly all day, to suffer more was bad in the extreme. Our grandfathers finally yielded to the superiority of arms, and pensively walked away, leaving Bunker Hill Monument in the hands of the British.

My grandfather denies that General McClellan operated in the harbor with the Stevens Battery, or that Alexander the Great led the Carthaginians to the support of the British; and regrets very much that the Government didn't send one of its Monitors there in time to take those British vessels under her arms and walk off with them, much to the consternation of the British.

PAULSON says he has lately read one of the best and most interesting novels, and finds it a tortoise shell of stuff, evidently by a foreign author, and asks the question: "Is it true that some papers rehash foreign stories, and give them out as original? It is true, Mr. P. It is a favorite mode of making capital out of other people's investments, and of passing them off with cheap matter. Such stuff finds no place in these columns."

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THE OLD WOOD HERO!

Nick Whiffles, whom Capt. Adams introduces in his captivation

PHANTOM PRINCESS,

is the type-man of the Forest—a revived Pathfinder, in fact, such as all border men and hunters have met in the American Wilds, and on the vast Prairies and Plains—the hero of

MANY A DARING DEED,

but, with, as modest as a child and with tastes as simple. Mr. Adams, noted hunter and Indian-fighter as he is, evidently loves this character, and for that reason the reader will love it too, and will enjoy every line of the BEAUTIFUL AND IMPRESSIVE STORY OF THE HILLS AND WOODS!

MATCHMAKERS.

I wish that there was a prayer in the "Service Book" which ran thus: "From all matchmakers deliver us." I'd answer amen, amen, and double amen to it, for a race like these should be exterminated.

Slimy serpents are, for they crawl into society, and often blast once happy and pleasurable homes. When I get married

I think I've got sense enough to pick out a husband for myself. I can't believe in having another woman make love for me.

That is a thing I feel fully competent to do myself, and if any woman does want to do it for me, she had better not let me know it, for I'll expose her vile machinations, and give her real name in the "SATURDAY JOURNAL," and then the whole world—least the sensible part of it—will hear it.

Is it not degrading to our sex to have these matchmakers going about doing harm, as I have yet to learn of a marriage

that is an extremely happy one which was brought about by one of these poke-their-

nose-into-every-one's-affairs. I sometimes imagine that they go upon this principle—they are unhappy themselves and want others to be equally miserable; or, it may be, they get a commission on every match they make—a fashionable way of speculating in human stock, but a poor trade, I take it, for the yoked people.

There is a certain boarding-house keeper in a certain city, who always in receiving applications for board for single parties (she takes no married people), remarks that her boarders always make good matches, and it does her old heart good to see young people happy. Perhaps they stay with her a long time and then rush off into matrimony, and go house-keeping for themselves. Perhaps you think it must be a losing rather than a paying business to lose these boarders. Not a bit of it! She's got her eyes open. When a plain-looking man or girl applies for board, her rooms are always full, but it is just the reverse with handsome individuals; rooms are always to let to them. She has a way of putting them in couples at the table, and slyly hints that Mr. W. has hopes of gaining the affections of Miss X. Well, she soon has a set of lovers at her meals, and, as a general thing, love taking away their appetites, they eat less, and Mrs. Landlady makes a saving in her victuals. Let her boarders go! What cares she? More will come, and solely for the purpose of getting married. This woman is a matchmaker

from head to foot, and there are many a couple who curse the day they ever went to her.

I wish my foot was large enough to crush out the whole nation of matchmakers, or, as they might more properly be called, mismatch-makers.

"Ah" but says Mrs. M., "matches were made in heaven, and if we can be the means of furthering heaven's designs, why should you blame us, Eve?"

I reply: "I agree with you about matches being made in heaven, but, fall all the more to see what you have to do about it."

I love the old style of marrying, where you could select and court for yourself, and then, if John wasn't all you thought him to be, you had no one to blame but yourself. Men never are matchmakers, and that's where they're right; why can't women do as well—mind their business? Oh! I wouldn't want to think I loved Charlie because some one else told me to!

Come, meddling, mischievous matchmakers, leave us alone, and let love come from the heart, and, in polite language, just mind your own business. Do not think me too harsh in what I have said, but, you don't catch me "playing second fiddle" to a matchmaker, not by any means. That day will never come to

EVES LAWLESS.

A STRANGE CHARACTER is Mr. Albert W. Aiken's new woman-actor, in his enchanting and exciting serial, THE WHITE WITCH, soon to commence in this paper. It is one of its author's best works, eclipsing even his truly superb "Heart of Fire." Watch for it!

TEACH IT TO THE CHILDREN.

CHILDREN should be taught to love all things in Nature. There is a natural germ of love for all things beautiful in the heart of every little child, and this may be cultivated to the everlasting benefit of the child, or crushed to its everlasting detriment.

I never see a child who loves flowers and trees, and all the lovely things scattered about us; who never passes along a road without plucking any stray blossom blooming there; who notices and treasures the lowly ferns and mosses under its feet, but I think that child will never be a very bad person. It carries its shield against vice in its love for God's beautiful.

I know a woman who, ignorantly of course, daily does an injury to her children in this respect. Every day she breaks one of the links of the golden chain of love between them and Nature—that precious chain that binds them to virtue and holds them back from vice. Flowers, she thinks, are pretty, but she can see no beauty in the wondrous lichens and mosses that at every step speak to the hearts of her children—they are homely trash, good only to make a litter on her clean floor. The instincts of her children lead them to treasure up these inmates of the wood, to put them in a saucer of water, and watch their wonderful unfolding day by day. But coming in with a basket of feathery ferns, lichens, mosses and cones—all the little things the forest holds out to innocent hearts—they are met with an impatience! "What on earth are you going to do with that trash? Pretty stuff to play with, isn't it? I can not have you making a muss on the floor. Throw them away!"

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SATURDAY JOURNAL.

5

come frozen within his veins. In addition to the two sets of skate tracks, left by himself and the young lady in their up and down excursions, he now saw a third, whose bold scores upon the ice showed them to have been from the feet of a man! There were confused curves and zigzagging, as if there had been a struggle, or some slight difficulty at starting; but, beyond that point, there were two sets of straight continuous furrows, running parallel, and side by side, as if the skaters had gone away with joined hands.

The direction was down the river—toward home.

At a glance Frank Hill recognized the thin score left by the slender steel blades on the feet of Miss Clinton. But the man who had gone skating so close by her side—who was he?

A painful suspicion shot through his brain. He remembered that, shortly after leaving the house, they had passed a man upon the ice, who was also on skates. They had brushed so near him, as to see who he was, and in the moonlight had beheld a countenance bearing a most sinister cast. It was the face of Charles Lansing, whom Frank knew to be a rival suitor for the hand of Kate Clinton.

This man had made his appearance in the neighborhood some three months before; coming no one knew whence. In fact, there was nothing known of him, except his name; and this might easily have been an assumed one. He put up at the principal hotel of the village; appeared to have money, and to be a gentleman of birth and education. Was Charles Lansing the man who had come to Miss Clinton upon the ice and carried her away with him? It could be no other; for Hill now remembered having heard the ring of skates behind, as they were coming up the river from the place where Lansing had been seen, and shortly after they had passed him.

The first thought of Kate Clinton's lover was one of a most painful nature. It was, in fact, a bitter pang of jealousy. Had the whole thing been prearranged, and had she willingly gone away with this stranger, who, though a stranger to others, might be better known to her? Lansing, if not what might be called a handsome man, was good-looking enough to give cause for jealousy.

It was a fearful reflection for Frank Hill; but, fortunately, it did not long endure. It passed like a spasm; another, nearly as painful, taking its place. He recalled a rumor that had been for some days current in the neighborhood—of a strangeness observed in the behavior of the hotel guest, that had caused doubts about his sanity. And more forcibly came back to Frank Hill's mind, what he had heard that very morning—how Lansing had presented himself at the house of Miss Clinton's father, proposed marriage to her, and, when refused, had acted in such a strange manner—uttering wild speeches and threats against the life of the young lady—that it became necessary to use force in removing him from the premises.

Could this be the explanation of the disappearance? Was the maniac now in the act of carrying out the menace he had made—some terrible mode of vengeance under the wild promptings of insanity?

The thought came quick, for this whole series of surprises and conjectures did not occupy three seconds of time. And with the last of these, Frank Hill threw all his strength into a propulsive effort, and shot off like an arrow down the river.

A bend was soon passed, beyond which there was a stretch of clear ice extending for more than a mile. Away at the further end, two forms were dimly discernible; and upon the still, frosty air could be heard the faint ringing of skates, at intervals repeating their strokes.

Frank Hill had no doubt about one of these being she of whom he was in search; and, nerved by the sight, he threw fresh vigor into his limbs, and flew over the smooth surface like a bird upon the wing.

On, past rock and tree, and hill, and farm-houses sleeping in silence; on, in long sweeping strides; his eyes flashing, but fixed upon the two forms, every moment getting more clearly discernible as the distance became lessened by his speed.

And now he was near enough to see that it was Lansing.

The latter, glancing over his shoulder, recognized his pursuer; and, taking a fresh hold on the wrist of his apparently unwilling partner, he forced her onward with increased velocity.

She had looked back and saw who was coming after. The silver light of the moon, falling upon her face, showed an expression of sadness suddenly changing to hope; and, raising her gloved hand in the air, she sent back a cry for help.

It was not needed. That wan face, seen under the soft moonlight, appealing to Frank Hill for protection, was enough to nerve him to the last exertion of his strength, and he kept on, without speaking a word, his whole thought and soul absorbed by the one great desire to overtake and rescue her.

From what? From the grasp of a maniac, as the behavior of Lansing now proved him to be.

Merciful Heaven! What is that sound heard ahead, and at no great distance?

Hill did not need to ask the question. He knew it was the roar of water—he knew that a cataract was below. And near below; for, on sweeping round another curve of the river, the black, smooth water could be seen rushing rapidly forth from under the field of ice, quick whitened into froth as it struck against the rocks cresting the cataract.

The pursued saw it first, but soon after, the pursuer.

"My God!" gasped Hill, in a voice choking with agony, "can the man mean to carry her on—over? Stop, madman!"

Lansing heard the call, and looked back. The moonlight, falling full upon his face, revealed an expression horrible to behold. His eyes were no longer rolling, but fixed in a terrible stare of determination, while upon his features could be traced a smile of demoniac triumph. He spoke no word; but, raising his unemployed arm, pointed to the cataract!

There could be no mistaking the gesture; but what followed made still clearer his intent. Giving a loud shriek, that ended in a prolonged peal of laughter, he faced once more toward the edge of the ice. Then, throwing all his mad energy into the effort, he shot straight for it, dragging the young lady along with him.

The crisis had now come. A moment more, and Kate Clinton, struggling in the arms of a madman, would be carried over the cataract, down to certain destruction on the rocks below.

With heart hot, as if on fire, her lover saw her peril, now proximate and extreme.

But his head was still cool; and at a glance he took in the situation.

By bearing directly down upon them he would only increase the momentum of their speed, and force both over the edge of the ice. His only hope lay in making one last vigorous effort to get between them and the water. A grand sweep might do it; and, without waiting to reflect further, he threw his body forward in the curve of a parabola.

With hands and teeth both tightly clinched, with eyes fixed upon one point, and thoughts concentrated into one great purpose, he passed over the smooth surface, like an electric flash, ending in a shock, as his body came in contact with that of Lansing. A blow from one arm, already raised, sent the latter staggering off upon the ice, at the same time detaching his grasp from the wrist of his intended victim. It was instantly seized by her rescuer, who, continuing the sweep thus intercepted, succeeded in carrying her on to a place of safety.

In vain the madman tried to recover himself. The momentum of his own previous speed, increased by the powerful blow from Hill's clenched fist, sent him spinning on to the extreme edge of the ice, where he fell flat upon his face.

Perhaps he might still have been saved, but for his own frenzied passion. As the skaters, following along the curve, swept close to where he lay, the skate of the young lady almost touching him, he made an effort to lay hold of her ankle, as intending to drag her over the cataract along with him. Fortunately he failed, but the movement was fatal to himself. A piece of rotten ice upon which he rested, giving way under his weight, broke off with a loud crash; and in another moment the detached fragment, bearing his body along with it,

should have called? It was in my day; I remember well!"

"I don't know, papa," was the demure reply, as the girl bent over her crayon pencil and continued most assiduously to sharpen it.

"Yes, you do know, Madeleine," said the old man, in a low voice, looking straight at his daughter. "But, do you like Mr. Thorne, my child? Don't reddened so. I am your father, Madeleine; treat me and trust me as such, for I love you as my heart's blood."

The old merchant spoke very warmly; far more so than the occasion seemingly required.

Madeleine glanced at him, and in a moment her arms were around her father's neck.

"Yes, papa, dear papa! And I love you, papa, for I have no one else, you know."

The old man gazed kindly at her.

"No one, Madeleine? I am growing old, my child, and the dark shore lies not far beyond me. It will soon be in view. I would not leave you alone. But," and his tone changed to one lighter and less gloomy, "search your heart, Madeleine, and tell me if you do not like Fenton Thorne. Speak, my child—I am anxious to know."

The old man affected a tone of levity, but there was a reality, a sternness, a terrible anxiety in that tone.

The daughter noted well and quickly that pretended manner, and, as she wondered, a cloud drew apace over her heart.

But she answered, after a slight hesitancy:

"Yes, father, I will be honest with you. I do like Fenton—Mr. Thorne," and her face crimsoned like a sunset sky, as she bended over her work, endeavoring to conceal the over-tale blood mantling her cheeks.

"I am rejoiced to know this," said the

old man, in University Hall; and so absorbed was he in thought, that he did not heed the modest rap upon his door.

The student had just had an almost angry conference with Stephen Smith in regard to meeting Ralph Ross. Stephen had insisted that Fenton should pay no attention to the braggart—not to go near him; but that he, Steve, would see the fellow, and if he needed it, give him a good whipping. Fenton, of course, would not assent to this. Then the Kentuckian had become angry, and, in addition to his promised chastisement of Ralph Ross, threatened his friend, the obscure Freshman, also with a drubbing.

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in the companionship of Madeline and her father.

It is scarcely necessary to state that the collegian progressed well in love-matters, and strange to say, (or not,) at the expiration of two months from the time he laid eyes on Madeline, he was solemnly plighted to her as her accepted lover; and he, a headless boy!

Fenton Thorne and Ralph Ross never recognized each other, though singular as it may appear, Ross always spoke to Stephen Smith, most cordially.

Late one night—and we resume the main thread of our story—that night a raw, moonless one, in October—a single light burned bright and steady in the library of Arthur Fleming, Esq.

This was a rare occurrence; for, one of the life-long rules of the old merchant was: "Early to bed, and early to rise."

It can not be denied that a somewhat singular change had come over old Mr. Fleming of late. Nor can we say "of late," for, as far back as the evening of the great ball, it was noted that a shade of sadness rested on the old father's face.

Of late, however—that is, for the last three months—Arthur Fleming had been like another man. He was morose, gloomy, taciturn, and—if such a thing were possible with him—ill-natured.

But, to Madeline he was ever kind, though he did not evince toward her the warm, yearning affection, as of old. His mind seemed to be wandering—his thoughts eternally going out from him.

At first, Madeline had noted this with wonder; then with sorrow. The maiden became sad, and longed, more than ever, for the coming of her young lover, whose presence would cheer up her drooping spirits, and chase her sorrows away.

On the raw night, above referred to, Arthur Fleming, in dressing-gown and slippers, strode nervously, meditatively, up and down the limits of his library. It was eleven o'clock, and all had retired to rest, save him who most needed it—the old man.

On the table, in the center of the room, lay several large account-books, open. Heavy weights rested, on certain pages, around lay numerous small slips, containing memoranda of calculations. A single burner from the heavy chandelier shed its rays over the apartment.

"I can not avert the impending distress!" murmured the old man, in a low, agonizing voice. "Oh! it's hard to come down thus. And to think that I have so foolishly squandered away thousands on thousands!" My conscience tells me I have striven, earnestly and honestly, to redeem my losses. Day and night have I worked and pored over this dreadful enigma; but all in vain! I have seen it coming day by day, hour by hour; and now it is almost upon me. When the great, threatening wave breaks, as it most assuredly will, unless, indeed, a miracle should stay it, poor Madeline and myself will be forever overwhelmed beneath it! Poor, darling Madeline; oh! that I could speak with you, could tell you my dreadful secret! But Fenton Thorne, ay! his father is rich—very rich! Oh! that such thoughts will come into my mind! No, no; I'll be honest still; I'll trust God, and die as I have thus far lived, honorable and upright. *It is my last chance—my last move.* I will do my utmost. I will raise money by secretly selling—selling—useless finery; and then the good old Rover must be my friend again! In her I will risk my all once more, and I will trust my old captain to the last! If this venture succeed, if the Rover should return to port, I—oh! God! I will be saved. If she fails to come back, I am forever ruined! No hope then—no!"

At that moment there was a loud, decided rattle at the library window, then a heavy fall, as if some one had leaped to the ground. In a few seconds hasty steps, speeding away, echoed in the merchant's ears.

The old man sprang to the window, and threw up the sash with a sudden, vigorous effort. The broad flash of light fell, in a long line, far out into the garden.

Arthur Fleming started violently and cowered back, as he saw a dim, grotesque figure hurrying toward the street.

"Ha! He here! But he did not hear me; he could not! Oh! no! no!"

(To be continued—Commenced in No. 44.)

RED ARROW.

The Wolf Demon: OR, THE QUEEN OF THE KANAWHA.

BY ALBERT W. AIKEN.
AUTHOR OF "ACE OF SPADES," "SCARLET HAND."

CHAPTER XXXIV.

"Now, I know what the matter was with him before!" cried Boone, as he knelt by Lark's side.

"One of these fits, eh?"

Slowly Lark's scattered senses came back to him. With a vacant look he gazed into the faces of the two men who knelt by his side.

"By hooky! you've had a rough time of it," said Boone.

"I have been out of my head, then?"

"Yes, mad as a March hare," replied the borderer.

"Just look at the strips of deer-skin," said Kenton, pointing to the severed pieces lying at the foot of the oak. "You bu'st 'em just as if they had been paper."

"I feel weak enough now," said Lark, sadly.

"No wonder!" exclaimed Boone; "you've used up all your strength. Jerusalem! I thought you'd pull the oak over. I shouldn't like to have a tussle with you, when you're in one of them queer fits like you had just now."

Aided by his companions, Lark rose slowly to his feet.

"I say, Abe, have you any idea what it is that makes you act so queer?" Kenton asked.

"Yes; do you see this scar?" and Lark pointed to the terrible, livid mark that disfigured his face.

"Of course," Kenton replied.

"The wound that made that scar is the cause of it; that is, I think it is. The wound affected my head. I have never been the same man since."

"It's a mighty strange thing," said Boone, wondering.

"Yes; I have had these spells before. I can always tell when they are coming on. I have a strange, burning sensation in my

head; every thing before my eyes is tinged with red; the blood races like wildfire through my veins, then all my senses leave me. I can remember nothing."

"How did you receive the wound?" Boone asked.

"In an Indian fight. After it was given

me I lay for days between life and death. I escaped death, but this dark cloud of madness follows me."

"Well, it's the queerest story that I ever did hear of," said Boone, sagely.

"How do you feel now?" said Kenton.

"Oh, much better," replied Lark.

"Strong enough for to go on?"

"Let's be making tracks, then."

Carefully and cautiously the three proceeded through the thicket.

No hostile Indians barred their course, and by the time the sun reached the meridian, the three entered the stockade of Point Pleasant.

Warm was the greeting that they received from the settlers, but many a sun-bronzed cheek grew pale, and many a stout heart beat quick when the scouts told the story of Ke-ne-ha-ha's expedition.

It was sad news indeed to the hardy borderers when they learned that the greater Shawnee chieftain had dug up the war-hatchet, and would soon bring his painted warriors—hot for slaughter—to the banks of the Ohio.

Then, too, for the first time, Boone heard the story of the strange disappearance of General Trevelyan's daughter, Virginia.

The rage of the old Indian-fighter knew no bounds when he heard that the renegade, Girty, had abducted the girl.

"The eternal villain!" he cried, in wrath, "let me draw 'head' on him once and he'll never carry off any other white gal to give to the painted devils that he calls his brothers."

The party headed by Jake Jackson, who had been in search of traces of the missing girl, had returned to Point Pleasant just before the arrival of the three scouts. Their search had been fruitless; no traces of the missing girl had they discovered.

"I tell you what it is, General," said Boone to the aged father, whose sad countenance showed plainly his deep grief, "there ain't any use of looking for the gal, or that 'tarnal villain either, in the timber 'bout hyer. He's made tracks long ago for the Injin settlement by the banks of the Scioto, Chillicothe, or the red heathens call it."

"But, colonel, can nothing be done to rescue her?" asked the aged father, in despair.

"Why, General, you see it's a bad time for to do any thing. Within twenty-four hours the Injins will be around us thick as bees round a hive. Well have our hands full to attend to the savages an' keep their paws off our top-knots. I feel right bad for you, General, but you know our duty is to the helpless she-critters and young 'uns, hyer. We can't let 'em be massacred right before our eyes, you know. We've got to whip the red devils first; then we'll do what we can toward saving your little gal."

"You are right, Boone," said the old soldier, sadly; "the safety of the whole settlement can not be given up for the sake of my private grief. I must bow in submission to the will of Heaven, though my affliction is sore."

"General, I feel for you, but duty you know is duty," observed Boone, slowly.

"Heaven forbid that I should say a single word to swerve you from the path of duty. I am too old a soldier to counsel you to do what you will," said the old man, quickly.

"Besides, General, I think about the best way that we can strike for your daughter's rescue is to whip the red heathens that are coming ag'in us. When we drive 'em back, then we can follow them up and perhaps be able to 'snake the little gal out of their hands.' Boone was trying by his words to lift the weight of sorrow that pressed so heavily upon the heart of the old soldier.

The father shook his head sorrowfully. He had little hope of ever seeing his daughter again.

He knew the nature of the red-men well. If defeated in their attack on the station they would be apt in their rage to avenge that defeat by defeating any helpless prisoner that might be in their hands to the fiery torture of death at the stake. No wonder that the father's heart was sad.

"How many men have come in, Jake?" questioned Boone.

"We've got nigh onto two hundred, all told," replied the sturdy Indian-fighter.

"Well, we ought to be able to whip a thousand of the red-skins 'easy,'" said Boone, in a confident tone. "Do you expect any Jake?"

"Not above half a dozen, kurnel; we've drawn 'bout all our men in now," Jackson replied.

"Set the women to running bullets, and get plenty of water inside the stockade. The red heathens may make a siege of it," said Boone.

"Every thing has been fixed, kurnel."

"That's pert. Now, Jake, I guess we three had better take a little rest. We've been everlastingly tramping through the timber. Throw out some scouts up the river to watch for the red devils. After I've had an hour's nap I'll take to the woods myself."

Then Boone went to his cabin; he was followed by Kenton and Lark.

"I wonder what's the matter with the stranger; did you notice how pale he looked?" Jackson said, referring to Lark.

"Wal—yes, I did," replied one of the settlers, who stood by Jackson's side. "I reckon they've had a putty tough tramp onto it. Maybe, though, some on us will look white afore we git through with Ke-ne-ha-ha and his Shawnees."

Many an anxious face in the little group of men that surrounded Jackson testified to the truth of the speaker's guess.

In the cabin the three scouts stretched themselves upon the bear-skin spread upon the floor, and soon were in the land of dreams.

The hour's nap of Boone lasted some four hours, and the shades of evening were beginning to gather thick about the settlement when the old borderer awoke.

Boone rubbed his eyes and indulged in a prolonged yawn.

"Jerusalem! my eyes feel as if they were full of sticks," he muttered.

Then Boone cast his eyes through the little window that lit up the cabin, to the sky.

"It's late, too, by hooky!" he cried. "It's time for us to be on the look-out, for the red devils will probably try to cross the Ohio some time after dark."

Then Boone laid his hand upon Kenton's shoulder.

The scout awoke instantly. His slumber was like the sleep of a cat.

"Time for our scout, Kenton," Boone said.

"All right, I'm on hand, kurnel. Shall I wake Lark?" Kenton asked.

The third one of the scouts was still buried in heavy slumbers.

"Yes, he'll be mad if we go without him, or at least, I know I would," said Boone, with a chuckle. The stout-hearted borderer welcomed danger as he would an early friend.

"All right; I'll wake him, then."

Kenton laid his hand upon Lark's shoulder.

"Oh, much better," replied Lark.

"Strong enough for to go on?"

"Yes."

"Let's be making tracks, then."

Carefully and cautiously the three proceeded through the thicket.

No hostile Indians barred their course,

and by the time the sun reached the meridian, the three entered the stockade of Point Pleasant.

Warm was the greeting that they received from the settlers, but many a sun-bronzed cheek grew pale, and many a stout heart beat quick when the scouts told the story of Ke-ne-ha-ha's expedition.

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SATURDAY JOURNAL

78

"Pity we can't go on the war-trail, hey?"
"Big pity," replied the chief, sententiously.

"My brother thinks much of his Wyandot brother, Girty?" said Kendrick, in a tone of question.

"His Wyandot brother is a great warrior," replied the chief, evidently not willing to commit himself by a decided answer.

"Wal, I judged that you thought a heap of him by being willing for to do his watchin' hyer," said Kendrick, suggestively.

"Girty is a great Wyandot chief, but the Shawnee brave is not his watch-dog for love. The chief does a service, but the chief will be paid for it."

"Oho!" muttered Kendrick to himself. "I reckon I know how the chief is a-goin' to be paid."

"My brother knows now that the Shawnee is to be paid for his service," said the Indian.

"No more than right," said Kendrick, heartily. "I heerd the other day that Girty got some corn-juice from a flat-boat that he captivated on the Ohio."

"Wal! it is good. The Shawnee brave is to have corn-juice in payment of his service."

"Wal, corn-juice ain't bad to take when it's good," said Kendrick, reflectively.

"It is good!" replied the warrior, decidedly.

"I wish that my wigwam wasn't so far off," said Kendrick, with a sly look into the Indian's bronzed features as he spoke.

"Why does my brother wish that?" asked the chief.

"Wal, I feel thirsty, and I've got some of the best corn-juice that you ever did see in my wigwam, and I'm too 'tarnal lazy to go after it."

"It is bad," said the warrior, slowly, looking askance at the renegade.

"If my brother did not have to watch the wigwam he could go for the corn-juice and we could drink it together."

"My brother speaks straight."

"I'm sorry that the chief can not go—"

"Why can not the chief go?" asked the Indian, within whose breast there had sprung up a strong desire to taste the precious fire-water of the renegade.

"He is not watching the wigwam for his Wyandot brother, Girty?"

"Can not the Shawnee chief go for the fire-water, and leave his Shawnee brother to watch the lodge?" asked the Indian.

Of course this was exactly what the shrewd renegade wished.

"My brother is as wise as the fox."

The Indian bowed at the compliment.

"Will my Shawnee brother go for the fire-water and leave me to watch the lodge?"

"My brother speaks good. The chief will go," and the Indian rose to his feet.

"The chief will find the corn-juice under a blanket near the door of the lodge."

The Indian bowed, gravely, and departed.

"He'd smell it out, anyway," muttered Kendrick; "leave a red-skin alone for finding whisky, if that's any around. They go for it quick as a coon does for a tall tree when the dogs are after him. Now I'll jest warn Kate, so that she will know that the coast is clear. I reckon Girty will swear some when he finds that the gal has broke for tall timber," and the renegade chuckled in glee.

His fit of laughter over, he looked about him, carefully. No one was in sight; so he cautiously gave the signal agreed upon between Kate and himself.

A few moments after the sound of the cough died away on the night-air, Kate came, cautiously, from the wigwam, followed by Virginia.

"All right, gal," said the renegade, quickly. "The Injin's out of the way, but don't let grass grow under your feet between hyer and the Ohio. They may diskirr that you've eat your stick any moment."

"Do not worry, father; I know every foot of the ground between here and the river," replied the girl, a strange nervousness potent in her voice. "Come, lady; do not fear; before this night is over, you shall be free from danger."

"That ain't much danger in the grave," muttered the renegades between his teeth.

Then Kate led the way into the wood and Virginia followed without a word.

The renegade watched them until the dark shadows of the forest closed around them and they were hid from his view.

"I reckon my little gal will fix her," muttered the renegade, in a tone of satisfaction.

Then a thought flashed suddenly across his mind. With a sudden spring he leaped to his feet.

"By all the imps below I never thought of that before!" he cried, excitedly. "Shall I follow and stop 'em?" and he took a few steps toward the wood, as if to execute the purpose.

"But no, why should I?" and he halted. "One don't know it, and the other don't either. It can't be a crime if she don't know what she's doing in killing this gal!"

And then another thought came into his mind. The dull-witted renegade was getting strangely bright.

"The gal has fooled me! I remember now that she once told me that this Miss Treveling was the only woman in the world that had ever spoken a kind word to her, and that she would willingly lay down her life for her sake. The truth on't is, that she has sneaked the gal out of our hands to save her. The lover story was all moonshine. Wal, let the gal do it, if she kin. She little knows what she is doing when she saves this she-critter!"

Then the renegade resumed his place by the lodge.

In a short time the Shawnee returned with the gourd bottle of whisky.

It only took a few minutes for the renegade and the chief to empty the gourd.

Hardly had they finished the whisky when from the darkness came Girty.

Girty said but a few words to the two and then entered the lodge.

"Thar'll be a hurricane 'fore long," muttered Kendrick.

The renegade was right, for Girty rushed from the wigwam, furious as the panther cheated of his prey.

"Curses on you, the girl, is gone!" he cried.

The Indian looked the astonishment he felt, while on Kendrick's face was a look of amazement, of course assumed for the occasion.

"You have left your post," Girty cried to the Indian.

The chief did not attempt to deny it, but strove to excuse himself by stating that Kendrick had watched in his place.

Girty guessed the scheme at once.

"You eternal villain!" he cried, addressing Kendrick, "it was all contrived between you and your daughter to rescue the girl from my hands, you lying hound!"

Enraged, Kendrick sprung to his feet, drew his knife and made a dash at Girty,

but his opponent was quicker far than he, for, as Kendrick advanced, Girty dealt him a terrific blow with his tomahawk that fell him like a log to the earth.

"Lie there and rot!" cried Girty, contemptuously. "And now summon the warriors; we must follow our birds at once. As for this affair, you can bear witness, chief, that I struck him in self-defense."

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over yander, an' wait till we comes,' an' off he put on the lepe, like the devil wur arter him.

"It wur a good step down to Sugar Run, an' by the time Ben an' the boys got up the sun wur shin' through the tops uv the timber.

"Es luck would hev it, thar wur a emigrant-train stoppin' not fur from camp when Ben got thar, an' they jined the boys, makin' sixteen rifles, 'bout countin' me an' my pardner, who didn't hev his'n, seein' that the imps hed stole it.

"We wurn't no great while settin' onto a plan.

"I hed fetched up the keg uv powder. I reckin' thar wur thirty pound uv it, an' ole Ben nalled it fur his weepin.

"Uv course I know'd he wur a goin' ter blow up the cave, an' them as wur inside along with it, but howe he wur goin' to work it kinder got me.

"It wurn't long afore I did know, howe-somever.

"Ned, 'se Ben, 'you an' me ar' gotter do this job. We found 'em fast, an' they're our meat.

"I hed the keg up the hill o'er again. I know'd he wur goin' ter blow up the cave, an' them as wur inside along with it, but howe he wur goin' to work it kinder got me.

"I tell you, boyees, that this hyar thing uv creepin' in sech places ar' bad enuff enny way, but when a feller goes in thar to tech off thirty pound uv powder, it ar' jess ole pertickilar h—.

"But Ben Coy hed' sed it hed tu be done, an' that war s'cien.

"Ben he went down fast, luggin' the keg furster him, an' purty soon we warr whar we fust hev him. I telle you, boyees, that this hyar thing uv creepin' in sech places ar' bad enuff enny way, but when a feller goes in thar to tech off thirty pound uv powder, it ar' jess ole pertickilar h—.

"The boyees took kiver on thar hill across frum whar they cave opened. While me an' Ben crept round the base uv the cliff an' scrambled up to whar the sink-hole went down.

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</div

SLIDING DOWN THE HILL.

BY JOE JOE, JR.

The snow is falling softly down,
Though it is not so strange a sight;
Whoever saw it falling up?
And then you know it's always white.

It softly falls—it don't fall hard,
As anybody would suppose,
Or I would be severe,
Or that fake falling on my nose.

This little article called snow—
Stirs up for often snow—
The year is over, and by so slow
Fast, and my youth before me lies.

Again I leave the schoolroom door,
(Ah, how the boy's blood lingers still)

And go with all the noisy crowd
To slide with Maggie, down the hill.

Upon the hill's high crest again
I seem to poised my painted sled,

That won't hold still, while she gets on,

For a'ways we're the ones ahead;

Or while she thinks she's safe aboard

Or isn't under her at all;

And down she comes upon the snow,

Which makes my face red as her shaw.

I, trembling, help her up again,

But sh, she fears to go alone!

So, by her side I take my place,

And as the sled's a narrow one,

About her waist my arm must fold,

To save her from the fall;

A'ways, and then away we go

With speed that leaves behind us, all!

Oh, sliding now, so lightly pressed,

Our hands are in a perfect whiz,

And oh, our beating hearts are, too!

Like birds upon the wing we go,

I say—"My beautifull my own,

But here, we start a' sudden jump,

And like two wheels go whirling down.

Down, down! I think we'll never stop,

I think the world's all broken loose,

I think I am a pretty goose.

Then we bring up against a fence—

I bruised my head, and arm and knee.

I think I must have spoilt her voice.

For I could never speak to me.

The Forged Letter;

OR,

NOT A MOMENT TOO SOON.

BY CAPT. CHARLES HOWARD.

"He stands between me and notoriety. Were it not for him I would rise, and, in a few years, attain the pinnacle of my ambition—the judicial bench. I possess his legal learning, but not his eloquence. He moves hearts of adamant, and men who never wept, now weep at the vivid pictures he draws before the bench. His name is where mine should be—on every tongue. He will wear the judge's ermine, and I, his equal, must plead before him. Things must not come to such a pass. My path to the bench shall be an unobstructed one, for he shall be removed."

Thus spake Wilfred Anderson, as he walked from the court-room which had echoed to the eloquence of the man he hated. The lawyer, as the reader has seen in his soliloquy, was ambitious. He aspired to the bench; but Frederick Knight stood in his path. The young lawyer had burst upon the city with the suddenness and dazzling glory of a meteor, winning thousands of hearts with his matchless eloquence. Whenever he had a cause before the bench, the halls of justice were sure to be thronged, and the journals were filled with deserved eulogiums.

Wilfred Anderson noticed all these things with feelings better imagined than described, and the dark resolve constituting the last sentence of his soliloquy, he pledged himself to keep.

The rising young lawyer never dreamed of Wilfred's treachery. He believed him what he seemed to his face—the incarnation of friendship and brotherly love. Wilfred shrank from the idea of murder, in connection with his rival. At heart he was the veriest coward that ever walked the earth, and lacked the nerve to aim the dagger home, or administer the poison in a surgical glass.

But, Frederick Knight should never reach the goal already in sight. He should die, or live despised by the thousands who worshipped him, and hung upon his eloquence with mingled envy and admiration.

At last Wilfred Anderson hit upon a feasible plan, looking to the attainment of his desires. He would summon the demon drink to his aid, and they together would drag his rival from his enviable position to the depths of degradation.

At once he set to work.

For weeks the results of his dark plots were scarcely perceptible, and he almost despaired of ultimate success. At last he discovered that his rival loved a beautiful woman, and he resolved to estrange the pair. That accomplished he knew that Frederick would raise the damning bowl to his lips without much urging, and pause not until he had drunk its dregs.

An adept in cunning villainy, Wilfred Anderson penned a letter in delicate chirography, to which he affixed the name of a well-known woman lost to all which is good and noble. In his office, all alone, he did this deed, and one night he placed the letter, which was addressed to his rival, before the door of his betrothed. He knew that she would find it the coming morning, and believed that intense curiosity would overcome her, and bring his desires to a speedy fruition.

The attorney's plans worked to a charm. Opening the door, the following morning, Nettie Reynolds discovered the letter which she believed her lover had dropped the past night, while he conversed with her upon the steps.

"I will keep it until he comes again," she said, half-audibly, stooping and picking up the letter.

As she gazed upon the delicate superscription the color left her cheeks, and the letters attained the brilliancy of living coals.

She tried in vain to beat back the curiosity that thundered at the gates of her heart, and, at last, she drew the letter from the oblong envelope and mastered its contents.

One shrik welled from her throat, as she read the depraved name appended to the letter, and she sunk to the floor wholly insensible, crushing the fatal missive in her hands.

That night Frederick sought her side, and calmly she drew the betrothal ring from her finger and extended it toward him.

"Nettie," he said, staggered at the un-dreamed-of-action, "what means this?"

"It means, Frederick Knight, that we part forever."

"Explain, Nettie, explain!" he cried. "Who has been poisoning your mind against me?"

"Sir, you dropped a letter on the stoop yester eve."

"Indeed I did not, Nettie," he said, draw-

ing his letter-case from his pocket. "Not a letter is missing from the receptacle. And, besides, I possess none which I would be ashamed to let you read."

"Frederick Knight, you did drop a letter on the stoop. I will listen to no denial, which but further criminated you. Go from my presence. Never tread these carpets with your unsanctified feet again. Go!"

She stood before him like a wronged queen, and pointed with quivering finger to the door.

"Nettie—" he remonstrated, to be interrupted with the unequivocal command:

"Go!"

He did not move.

"Enemies are at work," he cried. "They have forged a letter for the purpose of estranging us. Nettie, hear me. I swear—"

"Add not perjury to falsehood," she said, stepping to the door and throwing it wide. "Take your departure instantly, or I shall summon the police and have you forcibly ejected from my presence."

He cast upon her an indescribable look of grief, and then slowly strode from the dwelling.

Nettie Reynolds closed the door to sink to the floor, and give way to the flood of tears which rushed into her eyes.

She loved Frederick Knight—loved him with all her heart, and it was hard to give him up. She believed the evidence of the letter found on the stoop, and had never dreamed that he possessed an enemy in the world.

Wilfred Anderson went into ecstasies over the success of his schemes, and believed the remainder of his conquest mere child's play. To him the dismissed suitor confessed his troubles, and Wilfred experienced no difficulty in persuading him to drown them in the intoxicating bowl. Step by step the young Demosthenes descended the stairs of degradation, and day by day his brilliant reputation waned. People deplored this, and cursed the demon that was rapidly extinguishing the brightest light of the northern era.

At last the startling facts reached the ears of Frederick's father. The old man refused to believe the stories of his son's ruin until an ocular proof was forced upon him. One evening, while the old gentleman was seated alone at the supper-table, Frederick staggered into the room, and clutching a chair, fell full length at his feet. Bending over his son, Hirtley Knight shed scalding tears, and cursed the day of his birth. Thus the ser-

"Drive ahead, ole hoss," said Rube, settling himself.

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while I'm a-narratin', fur he'll spile the hull thing."

"It warn't no great while arter he kim out

of ther States, when this thing happened as he tacked this name onto him, an when

"Drive ahead, ole hoss," said Rube, settling himself.

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